

Serious critique on maharashtrians and their ways assignment

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Serious Critique on Maharashtrians and their ways!!! All the characters here are entirely real, and resemblance to anyone you know is not a coincidence at all ??? of course,?? with the rider that there are honorable exceptions to every stereotype ... Most entrances to homes greet you with a ' Welcome' mat, or maybe a pair of?? plaster hands in Numuste pose, or even a sticker proclaiming " Guest is God". The Maharashtrian's front door, however, will greet you with the terse suggestion: " Slippers here" ... (Note the economy of words ??? Lesser mortals would have wordily said: " Kindly remove your slippers here").

Other such injunctions include: " Ring the bell, and WAIT" or (of course in Pune) " Salespeople and hawkers will be handed over to the police". Once you've run that gauntlet, and been allowed entry ??? but only after a good, long 2-mins inspection from the peep-hole ??? chances are that you'll be left to find a place to sit, while the family disappears inside to wear shirts and pull on trousers over their banyans and striped boxer shorts ??? the " Kulkarni Bermudas". That done, it is not unusual for them to announce, " We just had tea". And that is that.

Don't take it personally. We are like that only. If you had visions of chai and pakodas, you're in the wrong part of India. The Rest of India may waste time and money on hospitality. We have better things to do. The Maharashtrian shopkeeper extends this rather dim view of visitors to his customers too. Just because circumstances have placed him in a position to have to soil his hands with the degrading task of selling things, that doesn't mean you take undue advantage of him, enter his shop, and rub it in, by actually asking for merchandise and service, dammit.

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They've got their strategy worked out. While one may greet you with a " We don't stock it", another may helpfully point you towards some more enterprising shopkeeper (who is dismissively referred to as ' non-Maharashtrian') where you can take your custom. And if you still foolishly insist on being told the price of something in his shop, he'll put you in your place by saying: " It's expensive". While the other crass and shameless pursuers of business open up yards of cloth and waterfalls of saris for you to choose from, the

Maharashtrian shopkeeper will indicate a tightly packed stack and ask you to make your choice quickly. No " Aiye bhenji, kya piyengi? " obsequiousness from him. If it was legal and didn't cost money, he'd hire someone to stand there with a big stick so that you don't annoy him by entering in the first place. Many shops carry a stern warning on a little blackboard right at the threshold: "?? No pointless (" phaltu") enquiries". This includes asking for directions or for change for a hundred rupees, asking what time it is, asking for water to drink or for the price of anything in the shop.

But here's the thing:?? We've had women doctors and writers and thinkers for over two centuries now. We're big on education and reform. We'll change trains, take buses and walk to lectures on the most esoteric of topics. We'll come out in full strength, ages ranging from 9 to 90, to fill the classical music halls to capacity, delighting musicians from all over the country with our discerning ear. Quite contrary to the rest of our famously brittle, black-or-white character, we Maharashtrians are sensitive and responsive music listeners.

We may not like everything we hear, but we will rarely reject anyone outright. We attend music programmes round the year in gratifyingly large numbers, to listen to the rising stars as well as to applaud setting suns. For decades now, Maharashtra's Hindustani music listeners have been a performer's delight. Many a singer/player has said that it is always rewarding to perform here. And if not rewarding, it is highly revealing, because the audience usually has a discerning ear, which has heard a lot of music, and will make its pleasure and displeasure known, gently but firmly.

A musician is able to get a good measure of his skills from the audience reaction in Maharashtra. A false note struck by the artist will get a murmur of ??? not quite disapproval ??? but something like discomfort, or sometimes even sympathy, particularly if it is a young up-coming performer or an ageing, much loved ustad/pundit. Experiments will not necessarily be frowned upon. When a musician first reveals a variation that he has introduced, our ears are on high-alert, while we consult our music-souls ??? and our encyclopaedic knowledge ??? about whether it feels and sounds right.

The second time that the unusual note appears, this new spot, or jagah as it is called, it will be received either with small smiles, nods, clicks of the tongue and sometimes with an out-and-out " Wah-wah! " ?? If we don't like what we hear, the performer will hear the stony (the Marathi word for it is makkha) silence, see us looking away uneasily, and get the message. We won't be rude at the performance, but it is possible that on our way home one of us will ask: " What was he doing treating the Rag like a dombari

(street acrobat)? " How we dress for a performance is also something quite unique. Simply put, we just don't dress up.

Unlike in other parts of India, music performances here are rarely or never ' dos' at which we must be seen. So what we wear is immaterial. We will not turn up in tussar silks and diamonds????? more likely it'll be sensible synthetics and flat-heeled sandals, even those plain-jane corduroy black slip-on shoes that are so practical when it comes to running for that last bus after the program ... And while on the topic of dressing: if it rains, while the rest of India cowers under trees or buys fashionable rainwear, we are known to keep our heads dry by simply wearing a plastic bag on it. Sartorial fussiness is for the prissy Rest of India.

Ostentation and excess of any kind we disdain. So Bollywood leaves most of us cold. Having a film star for a neighbour is more than likely to really annoy us, " because he and his friends use the lift too much, till all odd hours of the night". We might hang around a cricketer's home to catch a glimpse or have our kids photographed with him, but film stars ... naaah ??? or " shyaa" as we like to say, when at our dismissive best. Hindi not being our strong point, we might say peevishly to the rikshaw driver who slows down to gawk at a passing film star: ?? " Arre, amchya paas Sachin hay, terr is bunder ko kyon baghneka? While Marathi is our mother tongue, sarcasm is our second language. We learn it at our granny's knee. Other kids are complimented with a " What a sweet child you are", when they behave. The Maharshtrian child is rewarded with: " Wah ... today you're giving your stupidity a rest? "?? So we're caustic ... even when we're being helpful. The first Marathi words

that outsiders quickly learn from the bus conductors is:?? “ Array ... maraychay kay? ” (“ Hey ... want to die? “). It’s just the warm Marathi way of telling you to come to the front of the bus and not risk your life on the crowded footboard. Abrupt’ is our middle name. No elaborate, formal, polite conversations for us. Displaying affection, paying and accepting compliments, making small talk ... we just can’t do it. Greet one of us with a hug, and we’re likely to go stiff and subtly ward you off with a rigid palms-outward pre-emptive move. If you step back and say, “ You’re looking lovely”, we’ll look away and mumble or make some silly joke and change the subject fast. Don; t expect a simple ‘ thank you’, and furthermore, don’t ever expect to be complimented in return.

We wouldn’t know how. Now go read something else. It’s our lunch time. As we say in Marathi ... Just like the Oxford English Dictionary periodically absorbs words of Indian origin, and in that way acknowledges that they are now in such common use that they have become part of English vocabulary, it’s time for an update of the Marathi dictionaries too. There are some English words and phrases that we Puneris love so much, and use so effectively while speaking Marathi, that future generations won’t recognize them as non-Marathi words at all.

Whether they’ve become so popular and easily absorbed into everyday Marathi because they perform a role that the original Marathi word cannot, or whether it’s just our way of shining marna (see below), is the stuff of debate between linguists, sociologists, and psychologists, far beyond the humble scope of this scribe. Here we will only attempt to list the Top Twenty

of these imports and show you how they're correctly pronounced and used in Marathi ??? by the man on the street and by characters in Marathi serials.

Actchually: ?? We love actchually. It is used soto voce, when we want to tell ou an inside secret, as in: ?? Actchually, they are not married. Or we may use it for emphasis, like: Actchually (which means ??? believe it or not), he drove over the divider. (A common occurrence in Pune). Aadmit zalay: ?? Anyone who is hospitalized, is Aadmit zalay. Not pronounced in some clipped ungrezi 'udmit' way ??? but as 'aadmit'. Once a person has been declared aadmit, then all his relatives are free to take leave from work, no questions asked, to watch if he is going to 'off zalay' (as in leave for heavenly abode). As A: ?? Used in the sense of 'in the capacity of'. Somebody's husband is transferred to Head Office 'As A general manager'.

The 'A' is pronounced as in age. You may be asked, if you inform someone that you work, say in a newspaper office: "As A ...?" ?? Then you reply: sub-editor, writer, reporter, general manager... etc. Cansull: ?? No doubt there is a Marathi word for this, but we take great pleasure in announcing "Cansull" ??? if someone asks ??? what happened to the meeting, why is not being held? Or what happened to the 10. 15 bus? Cansull has a blunt finality to it which we love. Rolls off our tongue so well. Chappterr: ?? No, not as in chapter of a book or chapter of an association, and other such ordinary chapters.

This one means 'a real character', an eccentric. Next time you meet some crazy uncle of yours, go home muttering to yourself "What a Chappterr". And you'll get the flavor of how we use it in Marathi. Deesh: ?? When we hold

a reception, and we distribute dry-as-bone chiwda and laadu sliding about on a paper dish, we will be at our hospitable best as you're leaving, and ask you: " Have you taken deesh? "?? Not plate, remember; it's deesh. And once you've eaten the contents of our deesh, our duty towards you as hosts has been solemnly discharged. And you can go home.

Doctor ni hopes sodlay: ?? Said with a somber expression ??? this signals that the person you're talking about has gone beyond the pale of medical assistance. Remember, hopes sodlay, is only ever about terminal illness; not about any general feeling of hopelessness, or disappointment, or having slim chances of winning the lottery, and such like. It's about nearing the end, signaled by the doctor abandoning hope. Ejjucated: ?? This word we love to masticate and spit out at each other. As in: If you ejjucated people talk like this, then really; or ... You may be highly ejjucated, but haven't you learnt any manners?

Faiu (5): ?? Somehow, we love our faiu. Even when we can say paach, we say faiu. And if we've called someone up many times, we'll say with some irritation ??? that we had to call faiu-faiu times. Imphrovise: ?? Reading spiritual literature helps us to imphrovise ourselves. It's got nothing to do with improvise as in invent or concoct. It's us, improving ourselves. See how we iron out the silly inconsistencies of the English language? Why the heck should improve and improvise mean totally different things? Real chappterr these English people are ...!! Juuust: ?? It means ' hardly a few seconds ago'.

As in: ?? The bus has juuust left; or the person you called up was juuust talking about you. For further emphasis, we may say juuust atta. Moodoff: ??

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When something really puts us off, when we lose our enthusiasm, we become really moodoff. And you shouldn't mess with us then. Give us faiu minutes to recover our mood. Neglect: ?? The way we use it, it has nothing to do with abandonment or desertion. If our kid is throwing a tantrum, we'll caution you against paying him any attention in one word: " Neglect! "?? If your mother-in-law is bugging you, we have one word of advise: " Neglect! " ?? Somehow, we don't like ' ignore'.

Possibly because it doesn't have all those lovely hard consonants that the word neglect has. Nervhus: ?? This covers a range of emotional states. From exam jitters, to awkwardness to shyness and on to anxiety. Don't be nervhus, we say kindly, when we want to put you at ease. Nonsense: ?? Any irritating theory, bad product, silly behaviour, unreasonable, childish demand, or plain stupidity is summed up and dismissed by the final verdict: Nonsense! Norrmal: ?? When we want someone who's nervhus to calm down, we may ask them to become norrmal. Also, if you're not your usual self, we may look sharply at you and ask you why you're not norrmal.

There's no abnormality hinted at here. It's just our way to check if you're upsait (see below). Shining: ?? To do shining, is to show off. You can do this in your new car, a new outfit, a new job ... just do shining and make everyone else jaylous. Tenshun: ?? A person who gets nervhus is also prone to tenshun. We get tenshun at the drop of a hat. Tenshun ala ??? we say, if you show up late, or stare at us, or worse, give us a compliment. And don't take tenshun, we tell you, when we want you to relax about something.

Thaankyou: ?? We have an uneasy relationship with this word (it's one word, in Marathi).

It makes us hugely awkward, if you thank us. We get all curly and say oh, We only, Your thankyou. Or we say angrily, What thank you, don't say thank you. And we ourselves say thankkkkyou to someone only when we want to be huffy and are dripping sarcasm. Upsait: ?? This is serious stuff. To be upsait means to be in a prolonged state of moodoff. Tears and diprayshun could be involved. Uselace: ?? A real four-letter word for us. Doesn't mean something that is without use. It's much more than that. It is a dismissive, nasty name that we can call you, if you give us too much tenshun.